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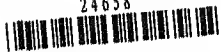
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Employment And Unemployment Situation In Northern India A Review

Ajit Kumar Singh

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Sector 'O' Aliganj Housing Scheme
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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN NORTHERN INDIA : A REVIEW*

Ajit Kumar Singh**

Introduction

Due to the relentless growth of population and labour force and the relatively sluggish growth of employment the unemployment situation has been continuously worsening in the country. The recent changes in the economic policy with their emphasis on privatization, liberalization and modernization are sure to further aggravate the situation atleast in the short and the medium term. While the general scenario on the employment front is pessimistic there are important variations in the structure and growth of labour force in different regions and states of the country. It is in this context that the present paper seeks to present a brief review of the employment and unemployment situation in the northern region of India. The discussion is mainly based on Census and NSS data for the last two decades.

Demographic Characteristics

The northern region comprises the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and the Union Territory of Delhi. The combined population of

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* Discussion paper presented at the Northern Region Employment Conference organized by the Ambekar Institute For Labour Studies at Girl Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, September 3 & 4, 1992.

these states comes to 197.47 million or 23.4 per cent of the country's population in 1991 (Table 1). The state of U.P. looms large over the region with a population of 138.76 million or 70.3 per cent of the region's population. The population of all the states has been increasing rapidly, though all the states have registered a decline in the growth rate of population during 1981-91 as compared to the decade 1971-81. The decline was, however, marginal in the states of Jammu and Kashmir and U.P. Two states of the region, namely, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh had a relatively lower population growth, while in the other states the growth rates exceeded the national average.

The degree of urbanization in the region is relatively low, particularly in Himachal Pradesh, where less than 10 per cent of the population lives in the urban areas. In other states the proportion of urban population varies from 20 to 30 per cent. However, the growth rate of urban population exceeded the national average in the region, except in the case of Punjab.

In literacy rates the states of the northern region compare fairly well with the national average, except in the case of U.P. which is distinctly lagging behind (Table 1).

Work Participation Rates

The crude work participation rates by sex and area have been shown in Table 2. Except in Himachal Pradesh, work

participation rates in the northern states are distinctly lower than the national average. Less than one-third of the population is economically active. Female participation in work is particularly low except in Himachal Pradesh. Participation rates are generally lower in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas due to lower participation of women in work in the former areas.

As compared to 1981 Census the 1991 Census shows a marginal decline in overall participation rates in all states of the region due to declining male participation rates in both rural and urban areas. The female work participation rates, however, show a clear jump in 1991 over 1981 Census in all the states. The increase is sharper in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas. The states of U.P. and M.P. show relatively sharper jumps in female work participation rates as compared to the other states particularly in the rural areas.

Growth Rate of Work Force

Table 3 shows the growth of total work force (main plus marginal) during 1981-91 by sex and area in the northern states. In general we observe that the growth rates of workforce are much higher in the urban areas as compared to the rural areas and that of female workers are much higher as compared to that of male workers. Across states one finds that employment has expanded at a relatively faster rate in U.P. and Delhi. Punjab has registered lowest growth of employment in the rural as well as the urban areas.

Growth Rate of Workers By Sectors

Table 4 shows the actual and per cent increase in total main workers during 1981-91 in the northern states by four major industrial categories. The striking feature of the sectoral pattern of growth of work force in the region is the very rapid growth of agricultural labourers and workers in the household industry. This may be taken as a reflection of the increasing pauperization of the peasantry and economic distress.

Sectoral Shifts

Table 5 shows the distribution of main workers by broad category of work in 1981 and 1991. Agriculture continues to be the dominating source of employment. Share of agriculture in total employment is 56.1 per cent in Punjab, 58.9 per cent in Haryana, 68.7 per cent in Himachal Pradesh and 72.07 per cent in U.P. However, over the decade 1981-91 the share of agriculture has declined in all the states on an average by 2 per cent points indicating a slow structural change in the economy. Agricultural labourers, however, show a rise in their share. Similarly workers in household industry as well as other workers have also registered positive shifts as far as total workers and male workers are concerned.

The pattern of shift has been somewhat different across sectors and states in case of the female workers. Female cultivators show a decline in their share in work force

except in Punjab. In case of agricultural labourers Haryana and Himachal Pradesh show a positive shift, whereas other states show a negative shift. Female workers in household industry show a positive shift in all states except Haryana. In case of other workers Haryana and Punjab have registered a negative shift but H.P. and U.P. a positive shift.

Status Classification of Worker

In Table 6 we look at the status classification of workers in terms of the categories, i.e., self-employed, regular wage employed or casual labour. Self-employed is the dominant category in all the states, though the proportion of the self-employed is relatively lower in Punjab and Haryana. On the other hand the proportion of regular wage employed is higher in these states. Casual workers constitute nearly 20 per cent of workers in Punjab, Haryana and U.P. This proportion is much lower in the hilly states of J & K and H.P. The proportion of casual labourers is fairly high in the agricultural sector in the states of Punjab, Haryana and U.P., where between one-fifth to one-fourth of the workers belong to this category.

Unemployment Situation

Unemployment rates as per cent of labour force according to different concepts as revealed by NSS 38th and 43rd Rounds have been given in Table 7. It will be observed from the Table that the unemployment rates in terms of daily status are higher as compared to the weekly and usual status for all

categories and areas. Female unemployment rates are generally lower in rural areas except in Punjab. However, in the urban areas female unemployment rates are distinctly higher as compared to males. For rural males unemployment rates are distinctly lower in U.P. as compared to other states. Among rural females unemployment rates are much higher in the states of Haryana and Punjab. In the urban areas Himachal Pradesh shows highest incidence of unemployment in case of urban males. The incidence of unemployment is particularly high for urban females in all the states except U.P.

Comparing the figures of the 38th and 43rd Round of NSS we find that the unemployment situation has generally worsened both for male and female workers. The major exceptions are rural workers of Punjab and urban workers of U.P., who have experienced some easing of the situation over the period.

Estimated numbers of unemployed by different concepts in the northern region according to NSS 43rd Round have been given in Table 8. Thus, in 1987-88 there were 15.38 lakh unemployed persons in the northern region by usual status, while according to the weekly status the number was 19.28 lakhs. But on the daily status basis, which includes underemployment also, unemployment in person days was as high as 159.22 lakhs. Rural areas account for the larger part of unemployment, nearly two-thirds or more. In terms of numbers

U.P. accounts for bulk of unemployment in northern region. Its share in regional unemployment is 47.5 per cent on usual status basis, 56.4 per cent on weekly status basis and 59.1 per cent on daily status basis.

Table 9 shows some aspects of unemployment as revealed by NSS 43rd Round. Thus, the rural areas account for over three-fourth of unemployment in Haryana, H.P., J & K and U.P. In Punjab the share is 59.2 per cent. Females account for a relatively smaller part of unemployment in the region, between one-tenth and one-fourth of total unemployment. Finally, educated unemployed account for considerable part of unemployment in the region - between 45 and 65 per cent. Thus, the nature of unemployment has been undergoing a change.

Table 10 shows the growth in the number of job-seekers on live registers of employment exchanges since 1970. Though not all unemployed persons get registered with the employment exchanges and not all persons registered are unemployed, these figures do indicate the rough magnitudes of the volume of additional employment to be generated. The table indicates a high growth rate of over 10 per cent in the number of job-seekers registered with employment exchanges between 1970 and 1989. These rates are far in excess of the increase in the labour force and reflect the extended coverage and changing nature of unemployment from disguised to open, from illiterate to educated and from rural to urban.

Summing Up

The northern Indian states have been experiencing a high rate of growth of population and labour force in the last two decades. Except in U.P. the work force has failed to keep pace with the growth of labour force and the participation rates have declined in the case of total and male workers. However, female participation rates show a rise. Bulk of the increase in work force has been in the unorganized sector. The fast growth in the number of agricultural labourers and workers in household industry and the growing proportion of casual workers indicate growing pauperization of the peasantry. The pace of the structural change in labour force has been slow.

The NSS data reveal that the unemployment situation in the region is gradually worsening and urban female workers are the worst affected section. In 1987-88 there were around 20 lakh unemployed workers in the region according to weekly status basis. In addition there is considerable underemployment specially in the rural areas. The nature of unemployment has been changing from disguised to open, from uneducated to the educated and from rural to urban.

On a rough reckoning an estimated 15 million jobs have to be created in the region between 1991 and 2001 to cope with the growth in the workforce and about 2 million jobs have to be created to remove open unemployment. Thus we have to aim at a growth rate of employment of at least 2.5 per

cent per annum. Clearly employment generation has to be the central focus of development strategy. This would require a significant step up in the investment rates and adoption of massive employment generation programmes in development of infrastructure, forestry, wasteland development etc. One has also to look more closely at the employment situation in specific sectors and industries as well as employment consequences of the structural adjustment programme under way so that appropriate technological choices are made and industry and location specific decisions are taken.

Apart from generating more employment, attention has also to be paid to the task of improving the quality of human resources of the region by undertaking massive programmes of literacy and skill formation.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Northern Indian States

Characteristics	Har- yana	Punjab	Hima- chal Prad- esh	Jammu & Kash- mir	Uttar Pra- desh	Delhi	India
1. Population (Million)							
1981	12.92	16.79	4.28	5.99	110.86	6.22	685.33
1991	16.32	20.19	5.11	7.72	138.76	9.37	842.93
2. Decadal Growth (Per cent)							
1971-91	28.75	23.89	23.71	29.69	25.49	53.00	24.66
1981-91	26.28	20.26	19.39	28.92	25.16	50.64	23.50
3. Annual Growth Rate (Per cent)							
1971-81	2.55	2.16	2.15	2.58	2.29	4.29	2.22
1981-91	2.33	1.85	1.77	2.58	2.24	4.10	2.11
4. Per cent of Literates, 1991 (7 years & above)							
Persons	55.33	57.14	63.54	N.A.	41.71	76.09	52.11
Males	67.85	63.68	74.57	N.A.	55.35	82.63	63.86
Females	40.94	49.72	52.46	N.A.	26.02	68.01	39.42
5. Urban Population (Per cent)							
1981	21.88	27.68	7.61	21.05	17.95	92.73	23.34
1991	24.79	29.72	8.70	23.83	19.89	89.93	25.72
6. Growth of Urban Population (1981-91 (%))	43.07	29.11	36.46	45.94	38.97	46.10	36.17

Source: Census of India 1981 and 1991

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Source: Census of India 1981 and 1991

Category	Year	Har- yana	Punjab	Hima- chal Prad- esh	Jammu & Kash- mir	Uttar Pra- desh	Delhi	India*
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Persons	1981	31.63	31.50	42.38	N.A.	30.72	32.19	36.70
	1991	30.83	31.44	42.27	N.A.	32.27	31.64	37.68
Males	1981	49.93	53.76	52.61	N.A.	50.76	52.67	52.62
	1991	47.92	53.34	49.72	N.A.	49.37	51.53	51.56
Females	1981	10.60	6.16	31.86	N.A.	8.07	6.84	19.67
	1991	11.29	6.78	34.79	N.A.	12.87	7.67	22.73

Persons	1981	32.30	32.14	42.96	N.A.	31.46	30.15	38.79
	1991	31.61	31.82	42.96	N.A.	33.50	29.00	40.24
Males	1981	49.83	54.45	52.45	N.A.	51.49	47.49	53.77
	1991	47.74	54.03	49.44	N.A.	50.15	47.60	52.50
Females	1981	12.29	6.90	33.37	N.A.	9.04	8.75	23.06
	1991	13.21	7.02	36.57	N.A.	14.72	6.35	27.20

Persons	1981	29.23	29.82	35.25	N.A.	27.29	32.35	29.99
	1991	28.48	30.55	35.01	N.A.	27.31	31.94	30.44
Males	1981	50.27	51.97	54.32	N.A.	47.46	53.08	49.06
	1991	48.49	51.73	52.34	N.A.	46.27	51.97	48.95
Females	1981	4.45	4.20	11.26	N.A.	3.46	6.69	8.31
	1991	5.42	6.20	14.08	N.A.	5.30	7.82	9.74

(Contd.)

Table 2 Contd.....

Category	Year	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Jammu & Kashmir	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India*
<u>Change In CWPR 1981-91</u>								
<u>All Areas</u>								
Persons		-0.80	-0.06	-0.11		+1.55	-0.55	+0.98
Males		-2.01	-0.42	-2.89		-1.39	-1.14	-1.06
Females		+0.69	+0.62	+2.90		+4.80	+0.83	+3.06
<u>Rural Areas</u>								
Persons		-0.69	-0.32	-		+2.04	-1.15	-1.45
Males		-2.09	-0.42	-3.01		-1.34	+0.11	-0.11
Females		+0.92	+0.12	+3.20		+5.68	-2.40	+4.14
<u>Urban Areas</u>								
Persons		-0.75	-0.73	-0.24		+0.02	-0.41	+0.45
Males		-1.78	-0.24	-1.98		-1.19	-1.11	-0.00
Females		+0.97	+2.00	+2.82		+1.84	+1.13	+1.43

Source: Census of India 1991, Series 1, India, Paper 3 of 1991, Provisional Population Totals.

* Excluding Assam and J & K.

Table 3

Per Cent Change In Total Workers in Northern Indian
States 1981-91

Category	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India*
<u>All Areas</u>						
Persons	23.0	20.0	19.3	31.7	48.0	26.8
Males	20.9	18.5	10.4	22.2	45.9	21.4
Females	34.3	33.3	30.9	99.5	73.7	42.3
<u>Rural Areas</u>						
Persons	19.0	15.9	17.6	30.4	92.9	24.0
Males	16.4	15.1	10.6	19.7	108.3	17.5
Females	31.0	20.5	30.3	98.5	50.0	40.1
<u>Urban Areas</u>						
Persons	38.6	31.7	45.5	39.0	44.6	38.3
Males	36.4	27.7	30.0	34.2	41.4	34.7
Females	66.7	88.9	200.0	119.4	76.5	62.6

Source: Census of India 1991, Series J, India, Paper 3 of 1991, Provisional Population Totals.

Table 4

Distribution of Main Workers By Industrial Categories in
Northern Indian States, 1981 & 1991

Category	Year	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India*
<u>All Areas (No. in millions)</u>							
Total	1981	3.66	4.92	1.47	32.40	1.99	220.70
Workers	1991	4.59	6.04	1.73	41.34	2.94	278.35
Cultivators	1981	1.61	1.77	1.00	18.96	0.03	91.49
	1991	1.81	1.98	1.13	21.85	0.04	106.97
Agrl. Labourers	1981	0.59	1.09	0.04	5.18	0.02	55.44
	1991	0.90	1.41	0.06	7.95	0.03	73.74
Household	1981	0.10	0.13	0.03	1.20	0.03	7.62
Industry Workers	1991	0.14	0.18	0.04	1.81	0.12	10.20
Other workers	1981	1.33	1.94	0.40	7.06	1.90	66.15
	1991	1.75	2.47	0.50	9.73	2.75	87.15
<u>Actual Increase During 1981-91 (No. in millions)</u>							
Total Main Workers		0.93	1.12	0.26	8.94	0.95	57.65
Cultivators		0.17	0.21	0.13	2.89	0.01	15.48
Agrl. Labourers		0.31	0.32	0.02	2.77	0.01	18.30
Household Industry		0.04	0.05	0.01	0.61	0.09	2.58
Other Workers		0.42	0.53	0.10	2.67	0.85	21.30
<u>Per cent Increase During 1981-91</u>							
Total Main workers		25.4	22.8	17.7	27.6	47.7	26.1
Cultivators		10.4	11.9	13.0	15.2	33.3	16.9
Agrl. Laburers		52.5	29.4	50.0	53.5	50.0	33.0
Household Industry		40.0	38.5	33.3	50.8	300.0	33.9
Other Workers		31.6	27.3	25.0	37.8	44.7	32.2

Source: Calculated from Census of India 1981 and 1991.

* Excluding Assam and Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 5

Percentage Distribution of Main Workers By Broad Category
of Work in Northern Indian States, 1981 and 1991

Category	Year	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India*
<u>Persons</u>							
Cultivators	1981	44.67	35.86	68.08	58.52	1.75	41.45
	1991	39.38	32.83	65.19	52.84	1.28	38.43
Agrl. Labourers	1981	16.11	22.17	2.72	15.98	0.81	25.12
	1991	19.53	23.31	3.52	19.23	0.87	26.49
Household Industry	1981	2.81	2.58	1.84	3.70	1.69	3.45
	1991	2.99	2.93	2.14	4.38	4.25	3.66
Other Workers	1981	36.41	39.39	27.36	21.80	95.75	29.98
	1991	38.10	40.93	29.15	23.55	93.60	31.42
<u>Males</u>							
Cultivators	1981	44.29	36.99	60.19	59.53	1.78	43.58
	1991	38.44	33.89	56.49	53.81	1.29	39.72
Agrl. Labourers	1981	15.62	22.05	3.10	14.16	0.77	19.71
	1991	18.89	23.41	4.06	16.86	0.85	21.11
Household Industry	1981	2.84	2.49	2.24	3.56	1.69	3.17
	1991	3.08	2.73	2.62	4.20	4.34	3.37
Other Workers	1981	37.25	38.47	34.47	22.75	95.76	33.54
	1991	39.59	39.97	36.83	25.13	93.52	35.80
<u>Females</u>							
Cultivators	1981	49.26	5.90	89.57	47.83	1.44	33.09
	1991	47.28	17.71	86.43	46.38	1.18	34.15
Agrl. Labourers	1981	22.00	25.29	1.71	35.23	1.25	46.34
	1991	24.81	21.90	2.21	35.13	1.02	44.29
Household Industry	1981	2.42	4.11	0.73	5.21	1.68	4.57
	1991	2.23	5.75	0.97	5.59	3.52	4.62
Other Workers	1981	26.32	63.95	7.99	11.73	95.68	16.00
	1991	25.68	54.64	10.39	12.90	94.28	16.94

Source: Census of India 1991, Series I, India, Paper 3 of 1991, Provisional Population Totals

*Excluding Assam and Jammu & Kashmir.

Table 6

Per cent Distribution of Workers By Usual Status in Northern Indian States According to NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88.

Category	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Jammu & Kashmir	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India*
<u>Agricultural Sector</u>							
Self Employed	74.27	64.65	96.38	91.43	76.54	76.30	59.13
Regular Wage Employed	3.18	9.87	0.11	2.09	1.73	23.70	3.59
Casual Labour	22.55	25.48	3.51	6.48	21.73	-	36.58
<u>Non-Agricultural Sector</u>							
Self Employed	47.34	47.79	31.68	42.47	56.17	34.76	42.60
Regular Wage Employed	36.63	39.95	33.59	36.89	29.85	61.23	35.68
Casual Labour	16.03	12.26	34.73	20.64	14.78	4.01	21.72
<u>All Workers</u>							
Self Employed	62.73	56.60	80.52	69.84	70.50	36.33	53.59
Regular Wage Employed	17.51	24.24	8.32	18.00	9.83	59.81	15.21
Casual Labour	19.76	19.16	11.16	12.96	19.67	3.86	31.20

Source : Sarvekshana, Special Issue, January 1991.

* Excluding Assam and Jammu & Kashmir

Table 7

Unemployment Rates As Per cent of Labour Force in
Northern Indian States According To
NSS 38th and 43rd Rounds

Category	Year	Haryana	Punjab	Himachal Pradesh	Jammu & Kashmir	Uttar Pradesh	Delhi	India
<u>Rural Areas</u>								
<u>Males</u>								
Usual Status	1983	3.8	3.2	2.2	0.8	1.3	3.7	2.1
	1987-88	6.5	2.9	4.5	1.8	1.8	5.7	1.8
Weekly Status	1983	5.2	3.9	2.1	7.2	2.0	9.1	3.7
	1987-88	7.9	3.5	4.1	5.7	2.8	0.9	4.2
Daily Status	1983	6.7	6.1	2.2	8.6	3.7	11.2	7.5
	1987-88	8.3	3.8	4.1	5.7	3.0	0.9	4.6
<u>Females</u>								
Usual Status	1983	0.5	11.7	0.7	1.6	0.1	-	1.4
	1987-88	4.4	7.4	0.9	1.9	1.2	-	2.3
Weekly Status	1983	0.9	5.7	0.7	2.6	1.4	-	4.3
	1987-88	4.0	4.8	0.9	2.0	3.3	-	4.4
Daily Status	1983	3.0	9.3	0.8	2.9	2.5	-	9.0
	1987-88	5.5	6.6	0.9	2.0	3.3	-	6.7
<u>Urban Areas</u>								
<u>Males</u>								
Usual Status	1983	4.5	4.0	8.2	3.5	4.5	3.3	5.9
	1987-88	4.6	4.8	7.0	4.7	3.4	4.3	5.2
Weekly Status	1983	5.7	4.9	7.7	3.9	5.3	3.2	8.7
	1987-88	4.4	5.4	7.1	5.1	4.4	4.3	6.6
Daily Status	1983	7.6	7.1	8.1	4.7	7.4	4.1	9.2
	1987-88	6.7	6.8	7.2	6.0	5.2	4.5	8.8

(Contd.....)

Table 7 Contd....

Category	Year	Har- yana	Punjab	Hima- chal Prad- esh	Jammu & Kash- mir	Uttar Pra- desh	Delhi	India
<u>Females</u>								
Usual Status	1983	8.0	9.6	8.6	12.1	3.6	4.9	6.9
	1987-88	9.6	14.7	10.5	15.5	2.9	10.1	5.9
Weekly Status	1983	8.2	8.1	8.6	11.9	3.5	4.4	7.5
	1987-88	8.8	11.4	9.8	14.4	2.8	10.8	9.2
Daily Status	1983	9.7	9.4	9.8	12.3	5.6	5.7	11.0
	1987-88	9.2	12.2	10.2	14.6	2.9	10.9	12.0

Source : NSS 38th and 43rd Rounds

Note : Estimates of Unemployment on daily status basis are in terms of person days.

Table 8

Estimates of Unemployed Persons According to
NSS 43rd Round, 1987-88

(Nos. in '000)

Category	Har- yana	Punjab	Hima- chal Prad- esh	Jammu & Kash- mir	Uttar Pra- desh	Delhi	Northern Region
<u>Daily Status</u>							
Rural	1965	1252	349	610	7178	11	11365
Urban	528	854	53	198	2245	679	4557
Total	2493	2106	402	808	9423	690	15922
<u>Weekly Status</u>							
Rural	262	159	50	86	811	2	1370
Urban	54	99	8	25	276	96	558
Total	316	258	58	111	1087	98	1928
<u>Usual Status</u>							
Rural	221	146	54	32	518	10	981
Urban	55	96	77	24	212	93	557
Total	276	242	131	56	730	103	1538

Source : NSS 38th and 43rd Rounds

Note : Figures for daily Status are in terms of person days.

Table 9

Some Aspects of Unemployment In Northern Indian States

Aspect	Har- yana	Punjab	Hima- chal Prad- esh	Jammu & Kash- mir	Uttar Pra- desh	Delhi	India
1. Unemployment Rate By Daily Status (%)	7.6	5.1	3.1	5.6	3.4	4.8	6.1
2. Share of Un- employment in the contry(%)	2.2	1.9	0.4	0.7	8.5	0.6	100.0
3. Share of Rural Areas in Un- employment(%)	78.8	59.2	86.6	75.5	76.1	1.5	68.5
4. Share of Female unemployment (%)	11.8	17.1	13.4	11.9	20.1	24.7	33.1
5. Share of Edu- cated unempl- oyed in Total Unemp- loyment By Usual Status (%)	47.2	59.2	54.6	63.8	47.4	45.0	39.9

Source : NSS 43rd Round.